BLANK VERSE,

BY

CHARLES LLOYD

AND

CHARLES LAMB.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

BLANK VERSE,

BY

CHARLES LLOYD.

TO PAINT THE FINEST FEATURES OF THE MIND,
AND TO MOST SUBTLE AND MYSTERIOUS THINGS
GIVE COLOUR, STRENGTH, AND MOTION.

AKENSIDE.

TO

ROBERT SOUTHEY

TO

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In offering these Poems to you I am simply consulting my feelings. The greater part of them were written beneath your roof, and owe their existence to its quiet comforts.

They indirectly register to my heart many sensations of affection and virtue; and must certainly remain unclaimed, if not acknowledged by you.

Farewell.

C. LLOYD.

LONDON,
February 26, 1798.

TO ******.

WRITTEN IN WORCESTERSHIRE,
JULY 1797.

Escap'd the jarrings of the restless crowd,
Oh, my *****, I am well content
To loiter here awhile! My spirit fails,
And my heart aches when jostling with the crew
Which (goaded to activity by pain,
Or rous'd from squalid slowth and apathy
By maniac wickedness) annihilates
The soul's best attributes! The world to me
Seemeth the prison-house of man, where Power
And loathlier Wealth inflict on trembling slaves
The rackings of despair! And Love, and Truth,

And social Happiness, and meekest Peace
From every beaten path are fled afar.
Sometimes a glimpse of their sweet countenance
Blesses the solitary man, who roves
Musing 'mid Nature's silent majesty.
And so beseems it now—for to my breast
A mild assurance of predestin'd bliss
Stole most refreshingly, and with strange calm
Allay'd my feverish agonies of care,
My ruffled spirits boding, and the pang
Familiar to that heart which loveth not
The ways of human kind!

Yes, as I rov'd
Adown that glade, above whose simple brook
The inwoven thicket bends, and caught a gleam

That from the unseen west'ring orb of day
Stole faintly yellowing yon cowslip bank,
Whose cool recess look'd quietness; each sense
Slumbering in soft enchantment minist'red
Its hallow'd workings to the lifted soul.

Often in no uninterested mood
I've told thee that there were of noble souls
Who deem'd it wise, e'en in the morn of youth,
To quit this world[a] (a scene in my poor thought
Deliver'd over long by outrag'd Heaven
To wasting fiends, and unrepenting guilt,)

[a] This alludes to a plan projected by S. T. Coleridge and Robert Southey, together with some common friends, of establishing a society in America, in which all individual property was to be abandoned.

They counted still beyond the Atlantic deep
To find those virtues, of whose sweets bereft
The unearthly soul calleth its sojourn here
A most impure enthralment! Oh my best friend,
That I had liv'd in high-soul'd fellowship
With such as fancy pictures these might be,
Tried spirits, and unspotted from the world!
But I must sicken thy awaken'd soul,
Storying their blasted hopes! Yet, honour'd few,
The seeds that ye have sown, the unworldly dreams,
The lofty thoughts, disinterested loves,
That ye have nurs'd, silently long shall work
In beings unknown, regenerating thus
Full many a guilt-vex'd mind, that, but for you,
Had sunken in dismay (now animate
With noblest emulation), and to truth

Leavening each baser wish, shall perfect them!
Yes! it shall rise again, your godlike scheme;
And every fleshly lust, and every sin,
Pampering the subtleties of selfish pride,
Shall vanish swiftly, as the morning cloud,
From its most holy influence; and all those,
Who struggled with the spirit of this world,
Shall come forth with unutterable joy,
And (as with recognition of dear friends
Long lost, and sought for) join the elect[b] of Heaven.

[b] Wherever the word elect is used in the following pages, the authors by no means intend the arbitrary dogma of Calvinism. They are both believers in the doctrine of philosophical necessity, and in the final happiness of all mankind. They apply the word elect therefore to those persons whom *secondary causes*, under providence, have fitted for an immediate entrance into the paradisiacal state.

Meanwhile, till I may find a brother heart,
Stain not my soul with sin, ye tainted scenes
That rise around! Oh keep me, gracious Heaven!
That to the councils of the wicked ones
I enter not! Man's strength is weakness; him
It booteth most to feel that he is frail,
And all, mistrusting wisdom self-deriv'd,
Stand trembling at the gate where Sin doth dwell.
Then let us, * * * * * * *, watch aloof,
Till the long night be past, that, so prepar'd,
We, with the first redeem'd from this bad world,
May hail the promis'd time, when pain and grief
Shall be no more; of love and blessedness
The hallow'd advent; and with unstain'd hands
Circle the grassy altar which shall rise
In every grove and mead, when *equal man*

Shall deem the world his temple, to that God,
Who destin'd all his creatures *to be good*,
And who, with sympathies of holiest love,
Shall teach best fellowship with kindred souls,
Or loftier breathings of devoutest praise.

WRITTEN AT BURTON IN HAMPSHIRE,
AUGUST 1797.

And I have turn'd away again from those
Who beckon'd me to ruin! Hollow friends,
Ye worldly ones, on whose unfaithful lip
The vacant smile sits ever, I rejoice
That you no more profane my honest name
With supercilious tongue. 'Twere better far
Not to be known or knowing, than to dwell
With the hard bustlers of this wicked world!
Whom shall I trust? for I have trusted many,
And they have been most false! 'Tis true there are
Who in the free convivial scene will ape,
With most deceitful seeming, the full soul

Of holiest virtue; and will sigh, or smile,
As they her delicate vicissitudes
Had keenly witness'd: but the ready mimic
Plant in his *proper station*, and the *thing*
(Though late so exquisitely organiz'd)
Will stand the *statue of obduracy*,
And scatter back, with strange inaptitude,
Love's unadmissible radiance. Oh my God!
Why is the fleshly heart so petrified?
Why all its avenues clos'd, and the high swell
Of infinite perfection disciplin'd
To base manœuverings, to the unnatural guilt
Of intellectual murder?

To repine
It matters not; nor do my feelings prompt
The coward weakness: for so tried am I,

That if a kindly smile ne'er met my gaze,
That if an accent of subduing love
Did never more pierce my unwelcom'd ear,
I think I could go onward undismay'd,
And uncomplaining. I would wrap myself
In holiest quiet; I would brood on years
That have been happy; I would strive to think
That the sincere pass on not unbeheld
Of Him who knows the heart; and I would shape
A happier future, a redeemed race,
The retributions of a better world:
Yea, all these thoughts should minister to me
Till I were rich in friends!
The noble soul
Swells as the tempest thickens, and most feels
Its own sufficiencies of happiness,

Its plenitude of solitary strength,
When all the puppetry of life's brief day
Has done its business; when the dark night comes,
And all is vacancy, or unshap'd gloom,
Big with invisible perils.
Bear me on,
Blest consciousness of virtue; nor sometimes
Let me not ponder on that[c] elder lore
Which shapes a world within, and thence derives
(Supreme of blessings) the unbending will!
Or if my truant fancy still must dwell
On aught save its own workings, let it fly
To unborn years, intensely imaging
That blessed spectacle when self shall sink
In the immensity of being, and God

[c] Stoicism.

Be all in all. Here, ye wandering thoughts,
Direct your workings—Hither, lingering hopes,
Turn and be satisfied! Than such a calm,
(Which steals when living in the days to come
With blessed self-desertion, present ills,
And present miseries, we annihilate)
I dare not ask for more! Let Him who hears
And weighs our supplications grant it me,
If so seem good to his unerring will.
Ungranted—I will struggle—not repine!

THE DEAD FRIEND.

BURTON, AUGUST 1797.

WHEN I am quiet, and my centred soul
Rests from its mortal working, it has seem'd
As though the dead friend liv'd again, so sweet
To me has been her memory. Evermore
Would I be so o'ertaken: for my tears
Were tears of pleasantness, and all my sighs
O'erflowings of affection! Hallow'd spirit,
Fain would I cherish the belief that thou
Guidest my onward feet, cleansest my heart
From every fleshly thought. Or when I muse
In sacred solitude, or when abroad
I ponder on my desultory way;
Or when in active life I force myself

To wear the semblance which my heart not owns,
I love to think that thou dost mingle still
The holy leav'nings of inbreathed love
With all my frail and unregenerate thoughts.
The dear remembrance of thy kindled eye
When it met mine; thy grasp of tenderness;
Thy mute expression of anxiety
When I was sore perplex'd; thy awful tones,
Full, holy, and melodious, that inclin'd
My difficult ear, and drew my wayward heart
'To the better cause;' all these live o'er again,
And fill the lonely hour with such strange shades
Of past existence, that I seem to greet
My former self, and be again that child
Whom thou didst love so well, who knew so well
The value of that love!

O thou wast all
To me—the vacancy which thou hast left
No mortal may fill up; it is a part
To thee and Heaven devoted! I would there
Treasure each manlier truth, whose rudiment
I learn'd from thee, best parent! Every form
Of beauty, every loftier thought, and all
The unshap'd energies which I may win
To bright perfection's aim; these visitants
Alone, that sanctuary of my inmost soul
Shall pierce, where thou dost dwell.
And when mankind
Deem hardly of my doings, I will turn
To thee, best friend! And if the time should come
When all forsake me, if at that lone hour,
That dreary pause of mental solitude,

On thy invisible solace I may lean,
'Twill fill my bosom till it overflows;
For thou wast pure, and sternly virtuous,
Yet tender and affectionate. Thy will
Was holy and unbending; yet that will
Was mild in act; pursuing rigidly,
With singleness of soul, the work that Heaven
Had giv'n thee to perform; yet bearing ever
Thy lofty calling with so meek a mien,
That all with mute involuntary awe
Felt ere they call'd thee good! Farewell, and raise
My backward heart to somewhat of the state
Hallowing thy mortal pilgrimage, that so
In happier worlds than this we meet again!

BURTON, AUGUST 1797.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Through many tribulations ye shall enter the kingdom of heaven.

DISHEARTEN'D outcasts, wheresoe'er ye be,
Who drag along the burden of a life,
Whose uses all seem blasted; ye who look,
And in the wide world's desolated round
Meet with no heart that heeds, no friendly hands
To work your glad deliverance: mournful ones,
Be of good cheer, for he whose loves and hopes,
Whose mortified desires are disciplin'd
By bitter disappointment (e'en till all
Or gross or bodily unsensualliz'd
Waits on the spiritual) in better worlds

Shall find it gain to have lost his being here.
Methinks the sum of hopes and joys withdrawn
From life's entanglements, doth manifest
The measure of our confidence in Heaven.
And for each mortal buffetting below
A guerdon of unutterable price
Shall there await us.—Bear ye then your cross
With inward quiet, ye despised ones!
Cleans'd by the trespasses of those who fain
Would vex your souls: turn ye their evil to good!
Yea, all the enemies *ye meet*, transform'd
By magic of unconquerable truth
Of ministers of happiness (themselves
Blind to the effect meanwhile) shall point away
Miraculous, of high triumph; and refine
Your spirits for the company of the just;

The sabbath of your God; when hope, and fear,
Or mortal change, shall vex the soul no more.
When in this low state man begins to live,
Though destin'd for a high career, a being
Mysterious, incorporeal, infinite,
He (shapeless embryo, whose future powers
Slumber in nothingness to the unpurg'd eye)
Is as the beasts who perish! Nor high Heaven,
A thing so prone to earth, to sense, could raise,
So prone to joys, which e'en the downward brute
May share in common, save by trial of pain,
And all the hard inflictions which correct
Our carnal longings. These so fierce desires
(Turbulent drudges to the better part)
Furnish the active impulse, push us on
To bold endeavour: but the *end* denied,

The *mean* collects a store for future days
Of feelings, thoughts, imaginations, (food
For the infant reason) and with sense unblest
Combines the loftier ardours of the soul.
Thus e'en *base lust* the being may befriend
Destin'd for high perfection, minist'ring
New aims, exciting to activity,
Most fortunate when most ungratified.
These are the chasten'd strangers in this world,
Loved [d] of God, who blasts, or ere obtain'd,
The promis'd pleasure; thus transferring all
Their disappointed feelings, blighted hopes,
To the 'divine stability of Heaven.'
And blest are they who meekly turn their cheeks

[d] For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

To him who smites; who bend before the rod;
Who in the furnace of affliction tried,
Shall thence come forth, enduring to the end.

TO A SISTER[e].

BURTON, AUGUST 1797.

MY Sister, often does my lonely heart
Dwell on thy parting look, thy grasp of love!
Dear girl, thou know'st with what a willing fondness
I've watch'd thy opening mind; with how much warmth
I've caught the unfolding sentiment, the wish
Newly develop'd: I have listen'd to thee,
And of thy innocent feelings have partook,
E'en till I liv'd in thee, and melted down

[e] These lines are printed in Edmund Oliver, a tale, by the Author of these Poems.

Years of past bitterness: and now unblest
By all the hallow'd charities of home,
By all those nameless offices of love
Which never pass its bounds; treasures whose worth
The mortal may not know, who sojourns not
An alien from his kindred, I would fain
Solace my spirit, imaging thy smiles,
Thy kindly accents, thy mute eagerness
To fill for me life's gnawing vacancies!
But, ah! the thought how distant thou art from me
Embitters the remembrance, turns the tear
Of gentle sorrow to so hard a pang,
I may not give it utterance.
But mayst thou
Live happy! And may he, whose shaping soul
Had imag'd a stability of bliss

This earth may never boast; may he prevent
The sad experience that would supplicate
That mourning one, that melancholy form
Of *dreariest* Peace, which broods on Folly's grave.
And with a fixedness of look, which tells
That mortal hopes and fears have shaken her,
Till all was blank, and they could work no more,
Strikes a most deadly calm. May he, dear friend,
His disappointments so transfer to thee,
That they may hush each mortal restlessness;
Yet mixt with somewhat of the sweet delight
Which mingles with past griefs, rather subdue
To a most enviable quiet, a mood
Of meekest self-content, than numb the soul,
Or freeze to apathy.

Nor do not I

Sometimes indulge the dream that we may meet,
Beloved Sister, in some lowly shed,
Far from the stir of men; and we will there
Sum up each earthly peril; and if so,
Our souls may win that holy confidence,
Cheering the pure in heart; some natural tears
Of no mean transport shall bedew our cheeks,
And we will hallow to the Being that gave
'The mystery of life' that blessed spot
E'en till it seem a little heaven below.

LINES TO THOMAS SOUTHEY,

ON HIS LEAVING THE AUTHOR TO RESUME HIS SERVICE AS MIDSHIPMAN IN HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP MARS.

September 19, 1797.

Soon the sad hour will come, and we must part!
I, not unmindful that 'my way of life'
Has past with thee most cheerily, full oft
Shall offer for *my friend*, when far away,
Affection's warm involuntary prayer!
And I shall brood upon the days we spent
Together, in the present time absorb'd,
Heedless of parted ills, and ills to come.
When on the silvery ocean we did sail,
And gaz'd on either side the gradual[f] slope

[f] The Hampshire coasts.

Of freshest woodiness; and when each eye
Glisten'd with joyance, as the downy hills,
The hanging groves, the green and tufted vales,
Of Vecta's isle[g], pour'd on the beating heart
Shapes of sweet character; or when we trod
Those glens whose forest shade majestical
Would ever and anon, as the gale past,
Disclose the blue waves melting into air:
What time we glided o'er the element,
Or trac'd those beauteous scenes, what transport fill'd
My swelling breast—the voice *of friend* was heard
With new emotion, and that *thou wast there*,
When I would muse upon those pleasant days,
I never can forget!

[g] Isle of Wight.

But themes like these
Suit not the present time—Thee duty calls
A hard task to fulfill—to quit thy home,
Thy peaceful home, and all the hallow'd ties
Of brother, son, and friend! Instead of tones
Soften'd and mellow'd by Affection's tongue,
Instead of kindest looks, and promptest smiles,
The tyrant voice of stern authority,
Or the coarse greetings of a brutish rout,
Must grate upon thine ear!

I know it well—
It must be hard to bear! But, at such times,
'Think on thy absent friend;' in heaviness
He too may struggle on his weary way.
Living in future hours, when we may meet,
Melt down the day's rude business, and the thought

That may intrude, and force thy manly breast
To wrestle with its heavings!
Now, dear friend,
Farewell, and prosper! Led in the right path;
Which, save the All-powerful, All-wise Living One,
None may presume to dictate to the soul.

LINES TO A BROTHER.

September 20, 1797.

Mr Robert, since we met at *that abode*
How many scenes I've trod; how many joys
And griefs have swoln my breast! Thinking of thee,
Dearest companion of my youthful hours,
I have subdued hard disappointment's pang,
Till it assum'd a shade so soft and sweet,
That it seem'd like very comfort. Oftentimes
Do I recall the days of infancy,
When we did wander hand in hand, and shar'd
Our tears and smiles, our tasks and sports, together.
Thou, younger than myself, hast ever known
How I have labour'd with a fervent zeal

To discipline thy heart for the keen wrongs,
The cruel buffettings that here await
Man journeying heavenward! When passion's gust
Or childhood's fitful pangs gnawing the breast,
Have vex'd the better part, oft have we sought
The lonely walk, and with sincerest love
Pouring out all our troubles, every wo
That ach'd within, have communn'd till our souls
Mingled with kindliest yearnings, and have felt
How sweet it is (pondering on the same path
Of future life) to lose ourselves in *one*,
A friend we *dearly love!*
And surely thou
Recall'st those moments when we frisk'd along
That path so often trod (a path mine eye
Dare hardly gaze on now) t' embrace *the friend*

Whose most intelligible smiles of love
Gather'd around her cherish'd dwelling-place
The choicest hours of youth! I was not by
When thou didst hear the tidings of her death!
And oh, my Brother! with what hollow speech,
With what misgiving, and averted looks,
Must we conceal the dull heart's heaviness,
When on that same spot we shall meet again!
Enough!—With grief's unprofitable pangs
I would not wound thy breast: for in this world
All grief is vain, which taketh not from guilt
The hues of fascination. Thee I know
Of tenderest soul; and I would not subdue
Thy mind with the indolence that ever waits
On pamper'd feeling, and the delicate train
Of coward sympathies! Bear thou right on!

Dream not of happiness, nor of the glow
That fills the inebriate soul, and satisfies
Its infinite cravings! The sweet consciousness
Of rectitude support thee, and the thought
That (in thy day fulfilling as thou mayst
The work assign'd by thy great master) thou
With sure feet pressest to perfection's goal!

The Circumstances related in the following Lines fell under the Author's notice, and are detailed without any poetical exaggeration.

Turn not thy dim eyes to the stormy sea,
Thou wretched mourner! for thy Child is gone,
Gone never to return! Goaded by ills,
Which poor mortality may not endure,
Unshrinking, he hath left his native land,
His native home, all the dear charities
Of brother, son, and friend! and more than these,
The inexplicable lingering ardour which endears
To the susceptible breast the scenes where first
It learn'd to feel, where young sensation gave
Mysterious import to the characters
Of Nature's volume! But he may not go

Without some sad memorial from the heart
Which knew him best, the heart which sadly mark'd
His full soul, and his vigorous spirit sink
Unmechaniz'd by pain!

And surely thou,
Deserted mother, for a while shalt feel
Some mingled solacings of gloomy joy,
When I relate his wrongs whose them dost weep,
Yet living, dost for ever.

When a child,
His father died, and died with ear which long
Had drunk the poisonous tale of calumny.
Five infants totter'd round the widow'd mother,
And he who should have screen'd them ere he went
To the cold grave, them, and their feeble parent,
With alienated love had left his all

In stranger hands, had listen'd to a lie
Which robb'd their mother of a taintless name,
And the *poor tremblers*, e'en on life's hard verge,
Knew not a father's kind protection; eat,
Though affluence might have blest them, the scant
meal
Uncertain; while their mother, with a heart
Torn, and misgiving of the future dole
Reluctantly supplied, hung o'er her babes
With sorrows heighten'd by a cruel sense
Of what she once had been, with agony
And unexpress'd despair. Meanwhile the fiends
Who fram'd with slandering tongue the deadly
tale,
That numb'd the fibres of the dying man,
E'en till he knew not pity, till he lost

All fleshly yearnings, they did gorge their prey,
And hug their hidden treasure!
Scarce arriv'd
At manhood, soon as *He*[b] began to feel,
He felt what injury and injustice are,
And bitter disappointment. He no friend
Possess'd; yet had a bosom that might own
All the varieties of social joy,
From meekest pity, to the expansive swell
Of warm benevolence, from passion's throe,
To the holier interchange of kindred souls!
How has he struggled with the instinctive love
That led him to embrace his fellow men,
And bind them to his breast! I only knew
The ruins of his mind; yet have I seen

[b] The subject of the tale; whose name the Author has purposely omitted.

The smother'd tear for passing wretchedness!
I've seen the faint flush, and the pulse of pity,
Working on his poor cheek, e'en while he forc'd
The unnatural laugh of hard indifference
To cope with nature's pleadings! Oh, my God!
I have e'en heard him, with most strange perversion,
Brag that weak man was fashion'd by his Maker
To live a lonely, uncompanion'd thing;
That he was self-sufficient; that the smile
Of sweet affection was a very cheat,
And love's best energies impertinence:
While ever on his favourite household dog
He look'd such meanings of a hollow heart,
His rebel eye express'd such sad misgivings,
That all he spoke fell flat upon the ear
Self-contradicted.

With some scanty wrecks,
Snatch'd from his father's stores, he struggled long
To brave the world; enrolling his fair name
With those who seek, by jostling with mankind,
To gain some footing on this wretched earth.
But he, the adventurer's wild spontaneous life
Leading, with ardour ever prompt to act
The heart's quick impulses, had not (poor man)
Been school'd in all the subtleties of fraud;
In that nice lore of systematic lies,
Which commerce, unrelenting task-master,
Exacts from those who'd fatten on her smiles!
His manly reason could not tamely brook
To shrink and tremble, and annihilate
Its noblest energies, at the curst sawa
Of mammon's sons—No; he had trod too long

His mortal path unbending and erect!
As well they may, in this world's difficult passage,
Who know not cunning's complicated schemes.
He fell, where each half-fashioned unripe knave
Is shuffled off by a more perfect villain.
His prospects blasted, his fair name traduc'd,
His very milk of human kindness turn'd
To pois'nous gall; distracted by the tears
Of his poor mother, and the sobs and prayers
Of brothers, sisters, who look'd up to him
For daily bread, he left his native land,
And with a mind resolv'd to endure
Through future life a most unnatural blank,
Sail'd o'er the element!

I saw him go.
He said not aught that to the standers by

Betray'd a suffering one; but he did look!
Oh God! he look'd pale, stiff as a ser'd oak
Blanch'd by the lightning; and mute vacancy
Sat on his face, as no soul dwelt within!
He went; nor human ear hath heard of him!
Nor human tongue made mention of his name!
Oft I pass by his dwelling, vacant now;
And at such times I almost curse a world
That moulds to guilt the energetic soul
Of loftiest promise; and for saintly worth
Invents a discipline which ends in ruin!

LINES

ON PASSING A PLACE OF FORMER RESIDENCE.

December 1796.

I PASS'D my childhood's home, and, lo, 'twas dark!
The night-wind whistled 'mid its leafless trees!
No taper twinkled cheerily to tell
That *she* had heap'd the hospitable fire,
Spread the trim board, and with an anxious heart
Expected me, her "dearest boy," to spend
With *her* the evening hour! Oh, no! 'twas gone,
The friendly taper, and the warm fire's glow
Trembling athwart the gloom! I listen'd long,
Nor heard, save the unfeeling blast of night,
Which chill'd my frame, or the sere ice-glaz'd twig

That hoarsely rustled! 'Twas too much—I wept!
Then I bethought me she was coffin'd far
Away—entombed on the earth's cold lap!
I look'd again; such thoughts were too, too true;
For no ray glimmer'd! I did pass along
Shivering, and bowed to earth with heaviness.

WRITTEN THE 12TH OF FEBRUARY 1797.

This is my natal day! To me the thought
Awakens serious musings, and the sigh
Of soften'd recollection. Heretofore
This day has ne'er return'd, since manhood shap'd
My wayward heart, not finding me the dupe
Of feverish day-dreams, and the very slave
Of hope's pernicious phantasies. This day
Has ne'er return'd, not finding me possest
Of her, whose parent-claims to love were lost
In friendship's mightier attributes! Oh God,
And I am doom'd this dark, dark day to know
Those dreams, hope's phantasies, and my best friend,
For ever gone!

It boots not to complain;
Therefore will I, with meek and bowed thoughts,
Muse calmly on life's desolated path,
As the way-wanderer, who the onward brack
Gazes unanxious, though the bleak day fade,
Though the wet winds sweep chilly, and the bark
Of shepherd's watch-dog from the far-off hill
Die on the gusty blast; if he reflect,
That still in scenes remote a goodly home
Awaits his wearied steps! Yes, so can I
Look on life's waste with the composed smile
Of resignation; tranquil in the hope
That I may reach the abode where tears are wip'd
From every eye, where the dear bury'd friend
Shall recognize her long-bewilder'd child!
Yet let me, as I travel on, if chance

A pilgrim like myself cross the drear scene
I needs must tread, mingle with his my tear
For this bad world, beguile the little hour
With what my spirit from its scanty store
May spare, in kindliest sort to entertain
One haply not unsuffering; then pursue
My simple path, nor let the woes or joys
Of weak, self-satisfied humanity,
Break the long sabbath of my centred soul!
Enough if I the vacant moment soothe
With social intercourse! 'Tis not in man
To fill the aching breast! My God, thou know'st
How the heart pines that rests on human love!

ADDRESS TO WEALTH.

WRITTEN JULY 1797.

Thou hateful Mammon, leave my loathing sight!
I view in thee the murderer of those joys
That satisfy the heart, with hard lean hand
Clenching the steel which severs lastingly
Humanity's best ties! Self-centring fiend!
Thou sealest every eye, lest any more
It catch the charms of nature, or perceive
The vivid movements of the human soul
Pourtray'd in fleshly characters; thou numb'st
The nerve that throbb'd so finely to the grasp
Of generous friendship, or of 'witching love

The more intense embrace; quenchest the glow
Of wide benevolence; mock'st her holy schemes
Of amplest bliss, and on her very lip
Freezest the mellow sigh, just risen to soothe
A passing wretched one!

I hate thee, Mammon!
I hate thy servants; hate them, Heaven, as those
Who counteract thy plans!

To me, methinks,
'Twere well to humanize the heart, t' expand
The active soul, t' embrace, with one wide wish,
The universe, and move (uncentred here)
As he that travels to a better world!
One infinite, benevolent, and wise,
Works through extended space, and we but live,
Living in him! Learn then, my soul, to look

With indefatigable gaze to God;
And struggle (aye, annihilating self)
To view the bearings of the complex whole
From him, and with him. This is the best aim,
The perfect triumph of redeemed man!

LONDON.

A POEM.

In solitude
What happiness! who can enjoy alone?
Or all enjoying, what contentment find?
MILTON.

THOU first of human feelings, social love!
I must obey thy powerful sympathies,
E'en though I've often found that those my heart
Most priz'd were creatures of its warm desires,
Rather than aught which other men less prone
To affections swift, transforming quality,
Might worthy deem or excellent!
Thy scenes,
Thy tainted scenes, proud city, now detain

My restless feet. 'Twill soothe a vacant hour
To trace what dim inexplicable links
Of hidden nature have inclin'd my soul
To love what heretofore it most abhorr'd.
When first a little one I mark'd far off
The wreathed smoke that capp'd thy palaces,
Oh what a joyous fluttering of the heart,
Oh what exulting hopes were mine! Methought
Within thy walls there must be somewhat strange
Surpassing greatly any wondrous dream
Of fairy grandeur which my childhood lov'd.
And when I heard the busy hum of men,
And saw the passing crowd in endless ranks,
The many-colour'd equipage, and steeds
Gaily caparison'd, it seem'd to me
As though all living things were centred here.

But other feelings soon transform'd these shews
To meerest emptiness, e'en till my soul
Would sicken at their presence; for I've sought
To cherish quiet musings, and disdain'd
The idle forms which play upon the sense,
Yet give the heart no comfortable thoughts.
Yes, I have sought the solitary walk,
Where I might number every absent friend,
And give a tear to each: I've nurs'd my soul
With strangest contemplation, till it wore
A sad and lonely character, untouch'd
By th' operation of external shapes.
Yet, London, now thou'rt pleasant—'tis e'en so!
For I am sick of hopes that stand aloof
From common sympathy; for I am sick
Of pampering delicate exclusive loves,

And silly dreams of rapture, that would pull
The shrinking hand from every honest grasp,
The shrinking heart from every honest pledge,
Not trickt in gracefulness poetical!
Sometimes, 'tis true, when I have pac'd the haunts
Of crowded occupation, I have felt
A sad repression looking all around,
Nor catching one known face amid the throng,
That answer'd mine with cordial pleasantness.
I've often thought upon some absent friend,
E'en till an assur'd hope that he was nigh
Has made me lift my head, and stretch my arm,
To gaze upon the form, and grasp the hand,
Of him who lived in my wayward dream.
And I have look'd, and all has been to me
A crowded desolation! Not one being,

'Mid that incessant and perturbed throng,
Dreamt of *my* hopes or fears! Then have I pac'd
With breathless eagerness; and if an eye
Has met my gaze, wherein some trace remote
Lived of one on whom my heart has lean'd,
A gentle thrilling of awaken'd love
Has warm'd my breast, and haply kindled there
A dream of parted days, that so my feet,
It seem'd to me, mov'd on in solitude.
Thus can the heart, by its strange agency,
Extract divine emotion from the scene
Most barren and uncouth; which images
To *him who cannot love*, who never felt
That ever active warmth commingling still
Its own existence with all present things,
Nought beside forms, and bodily substances.

Methinks he acts the purposes of life,
And fills the measure of his destiny
With best approved wisdom, who retires
To some majestic solitude; his mind
Rais'd by those visions of eternal love,
The rock, the vale, the forest, and the lake,
The sky, the sea, and everlasting hills.
He best performs the purposes of life,
And fills the measure of his destiny,
Who holds high converse with the present[1] God
(Not mystically meant), and feels him ever
Made manifest to his transfigur'd soul.
But few there are who know to prize such bliss.
And he who thus would raise his mortal being
Must shake weak nature off, and be content

[1] The doctrine of Berkeley, of which the Author is a believer, is here alluded to.

To live a lonely uncompanion'd thing,
Exil'd from human loves and sympathies.
Therefore the city must detain *my* feet;
For I would sometimes gaze upon a face
That smiles on me, and speaks intelligibly
Of one that answers all my hopes and fears.
Nor is to me the sentiment of life
Less acceptable, when I contemplate
Numberless living and progressive beings,
Acting the infinite varieties
Of this miraculous scéne. For though the dim
And inharmonious ministrations here,
Of heavenly wisdom, may confound the sense,
The partial sense of man, *my soul* is glad;
Trusting that all, yea every [k] living thing,

[k] See Hartley "On the final Happiness of all Mankind."

Shall understand, in the appointed time,
And praise the inwoven mystery[1] of sin;
Losing each hope and each propellent fear
In perfect bliss; and "God be all in all!"

1 "For the *mystery of iniquity* doth already work."
St. Paul to Timothy.

LINES

TO

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN.

I AM happy in being able to offer this imperfect tribute to the memory of a woman, whose undeserved sufferings have excited my indignation and pity, and whose virtues, both of heart and mind, my warmest esteem.

This will not be deemed a parasitical profession, when I avow a complete dissent from Mrs. Godwin with regard to almost all her moral speculations.

Her posthumous works, so far from convincing me that "the misery and oppression peculiar to

women arise out of the partial laws and institutions of society[m]," appear little less throughout than an indirect panegyric on the institutions she wishes to abolish. She (with all other great minds) owed her degree of intellectualization to the very restraints on the passions which she was aiming to annihilate; and the source of the miseries she complained of must rather be sought for in the brute turbulencies of human nature, than in the operation of any laws conventional or positive.

However, the heart and upright dignity of this excellent woman have much interested me. I never quarrel with opinions; and I fervently wish that the expression of my admiration were more worthy of its object.

[m] See Posthumous Works, vol. ii. p. 166.

"On examining my heart, I find that it is so constituted, I cannot live without some particular affection. I am afraid not without a passion; and I feel the want of it more in society than in solitude."

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin's Letters, vol. i. p. 178.

MARY, I've trod the turf, beneath whose damp
And dark green coverture thou liest! 'Twas strange!
And somewhat most like madness shot athwart
The incredulous mind, when I bethought myself
That there so many earnest hopes and fears,
So many warm desires, and lofty thoughts,
Affections imitating, in their wide
And boundless aim, heaven's universal love,
Lay cold and silent! Listening to the breeze,
That scarcely murmur'd thro' the misty air,
And looking on the white and solemn clouds,

(The only things whose motion spake of life)
I almost counted to have heard thy voice,
And seen thy shadowy shape; for my full heart
(Tho' to my mortal sense thou ne'er wert known)
Had bodied all thy mental attributes
In th' unintelligent and vacant space.
MARY, thou sleep'st not there! 'Twas but a trance,
An idle trance, that led my wayward thought
To seek a more especial intercourse
With thy pure spirit on the senseless sod,
Where what was thine, not *thou*, lies sepulchred.
Life is a dream! and death a dream to those
Who gaze upon the dead: to those who die
'Tis the withdrawing of a lower scene
For one more real, pure, and infinite!
Amid the trials of this difficult world,

Surely none press so sorely on the heart
As disappointed loves, and impulses
(Mingling the lonely insulated soul
With all surrounding and external things)
Sever'd from nature's destin'd sympathies!
This was thy lot on earth! Yet think not thou,
Man of the world, to triumph here o'er those,
Whose separate and immortalized spirits
Spoil them for life's pernicious intercourse.
This is the school of minds; and every wish
Drawn from the earthly part shall raise the being,
And fit it for a wider range, whene'er
The twofold ministry of flesh and spirit
Hath done its troubled business. Therefore thou,
Though here tormented, shalt in better worlds
Be greatly comforted!

I laugh at those
Who blame that upright singleness [n] of soul,
Which ever shap'd the accents of thy tongue!
Look to yourselves, pedantic censurers!
Examine well within; for much, I fear,
Ye would but ill endure the scrutiny
That only gives to her a nobler rank
'Mid beings compos'd of heart and intellect.
In this fantastic scene each one assumes
A borrow'd character, and all agree
To seem a something, which in his secret thought
Each knows he is not; which the God of nature
Ne'er made, or meant a child of his to be!
And if a *Man of Truth* make no pretence

[n] See the interesting letters in the second and third volumes of Posthumous Works.

To some *unhuman* virtue, the brute crowd
Pluck off his hair, and plant with bitterness
Thorns of reproach on his devoted head!
Heaven knows that we have passions, and have hearts
To love; and they alone embrute or soil
The divine lustre of the better part,
Who love, nor intellectual preference seek,
Eradicating from each sympathy
The holiness of reason, and that pure,
And high imagination, which would lose
The ° bodily in the spiritual.

I revere
That simpleness which gave to her pure lips
A ready utterance to each inward thought.

° My *earthly* by his *heavenly* overpowered. MILTON.

And I revere that *obstinate regard*
Which hung upon its object, e'en till all
The tender semblances, which lingering hope
Loves with such earnestness, were fully gone!
For passion, sanctified, will centre all
Its [p] warm hopes in a *chosen one!* Not dead,
Nor e'er abolish'd, as some idly talk;
Impostors, or base carles, who never knew
Man's dearest charities. And passions ever
Shake with most potent stirrings the sublime
And pregnant minds, which wield with mightiest
skill

p "The individuality of an attachment constitutes its chastity." For this remark, to which I implicitly subscribe, I believe I am indebted to the "Emma Courtney," of Miss Hays. The chastity which results from no original passion is the mere "dribble" of an ideot.

The multitudinous elements of life.

But if *that one* forsake the soul which twin'd

So many warm endearments round its choice,

The world will seem a very wilderness!

BLANK VERSE,

BY

CHARLES LAMB.

TO CHARLES LLOYD.

A STRANGER, and alone, I past those scenes
We past so late together; and my heart
Felt something like desertion, when I look'd
Around me, and the well-known voice of friend
Was absent, and the cordial look was there
No more to smile on me. I thought on Lloyd;
All he had been to me. And now I go
Again to mingle with a world impure,
With men who make a mock of holy things,
Mistaken, and of man's best hope think scorn.
The world does much to warp the heart of man,
And I may sometimes join its ideot laugh.

Of this I now complain not. Deal with me,
Omniscient Father! as thou judgest best,
And in thy season *tender* thou my heart.
I pray not for myself; I pray for him,
Whose soul is sore perplex'd: shine thou on him,
Father of Lights! and in the difficult paths
Make plain his way before him. His own thoughts
May he not think, his own ends not pursue;
So shall he best perform thy will on earth.
Greatest and Best, thy will be ever ours!

AUGUST 1797.

WRITTEN ON THE DAY OF MY AUNT'S FUNERAL.

Thou too art dead, ... I very kind
Hast thou been to me in my childish days,
Thou best good creature. I have not forgot
How thou didst love thy Charles, when he was yet
A prating school-boy: I have not forgot
The busy joy on that important day,
When, child-like, the poor wanderer was content
To leave the bosom of parental love,
His childhood's play-place, and his early home,
For the rude fosterings of a stranger's hand,
Hard uncouth tasks, and school-boy's scanty fare.
How did thine eye peruse him round and round,

And hardly know him in his yellow coats[q],
Red leathern belt, and gown of russet blue!
Farewell, good aunt!
Go thou, and occupy the same grave-bed
Where the dead mother lies.
Oh my dear mother, oh thou dear dead saint!
Where's now that placid face, where oft hath sat
A mother's smile, to think her son should thrive
In this bad world, when she was dead and gone;
And where a tear hath sat (take shame, O son!)
When that same child has prov'd himself unkind.
One parent yet is left—a wretched thing,
A sad survivor of his buried wife,
A palsy-smitten, childish, old, old man,
A semblance most forlorn of what he was,

[q] The dress of Christ's Hospital.

A merry cheerful man. A merrier man,
A man more apt to frame matter for mirth,
Mad jokes, and anticks for a Christmas eve;
Making life social, and the laggard time
To move on nimbly, never yet did cheer
The little circle of domestic friends.

FEBRUARY 1797.

WRITTEN A YEAR AFTER THE EVENTS.

Alas! how am I chang'd! Where be the tears,
The sobs, and forc'd suspensions of the breath,
And all the dull desertions of the heart,
With which I hung o'er my dead mother's corse?
Where be the blest subsidings of the storm
Within, the sweet resignedness of hope
Drawn heavenward, and strength of filial love,
In which I bow'd me to my father's will?
My God, and my Redeemer! keep not thou
My soul in brute and sensual thanklessness
Seal'd up; oblivious ever of that dear grace,
And health restor'd to my long-loved friend,

Long-lov'd, and worthy known. Thou didst not leave
Her soul in death! O leave not now, my Lord,
Thy servants in far worse, in spiritual death!
And darkness blacker than those feared shadows
Of the valley all must tread. Lend us thy balms,
Thou dear Physician of the sin-sick soul,
And heal our cleansed bosoms of the wounds
With which the world has pierc'd us thro' and thro'.
Give us new flesh, new birth. Elect of heav'n
May we become; in thine election sure
Contain'd, and to one purpose stedfast drawn,
Our soul's salvation!
Thou, and I, dear friend,
With filial recognition sweet, shall know
One day the face of our dear mother in heaven;

And her remember'd looks of love shall greet
With looks of answering love; her placid smiles
Meet with a smile as placid, and her hand
With drops of fondness wet, nor fear repulse.
Be witness for me, Lord, I do not ask
Those days of vanity to return again
(Nor fitting me to ask, nor thee to give),
Vain loves and wanderings with a fair-hair'd maid,
Child of the dust as I am, who so long
My captive heart steep'd in idolatry
And creature-loves. Forgive me, O my Maker!
If in a mood of grief I sin almost
In sometimes brooding on the days long past,
And from the grave of time wishing them back,
Days of a mother's fondness to her child,
Her little one.

O where be now those sports,
And infant play-games? where the joyous troops
Of children, and the haunts I did so love?
O my companions, O ye loved names
Of friend or playmate dear; gone are ye now;
Gone diverse ways; to honour and credit some,
And some, I fear, to ignominy and shame!
I only am left, with unavailing grief
To mourn one parent dead, and see one live
Of all life's joys bereft and desolate:
Am left with a few friends, and one, above
The rest, found faithful in a length of years,
Contented as I may, to bear me on
To the not unpeaceful evening of a day
Made black by morning storms!

SEPTEMBER 1797.

WRITTEN SOON AFTER THE PRECEDING POEM.

Thou should'st have longer liv'd, and to the grave
Have peacefully gone down in full old age!
Thy children would have tended thy gray hairs.
We might have sat, as we have often done,
By our fireside, and talk'd whole nights away,
Old times, old friends, and old events recalling;
With many a circumstance, of trivial note,
To memory dear, and of importance grown.
How shall we tell them in a stranger's ear?
A wayward son ofttimes was I to thee;
And yet, in all our little bickerings,
Domestic jars, there was, I know not what,

Of tender feeling, that were ill exchang'd
For this world's chilling friendships, and their smiles
Familiar, whom the heart calls strangers still.
A heavy lot hath he, most wretched man!
Who lives the last of all his family.
He looks around him, and his eye discerns
The face of the stranger, and his heart is sick.
Man of the world, what canst thou do for him?
Wealth is a burden, which he could not bear;
Mirth a strange crime, the which he dares not act;
And wine no cordial, but a bitter cup.
For wounds like his Christ is the only cure,
And gospel promises are his by right,
For these were given to the poor in heart.
Go, preach thou to him of a world to come,

Where friends shall meet, and know each other's face.

Say less than this, and say it to the winds.

October 1797.

WRITTEN ON CHRISTMAS DAY 1797.

I AM a widow'd thing, now thou art gone!
Now thou art gone, my own familiar friend,
Companion, sister, help-mate, counsellor!
Alas! that honour'd mind, whose sweet reproof
And meekest wisdom in times past have smooth'd
The unfilial harshness of my foolish speech,
And made me loving to my parents old,
(Why is this so, ah God! why is this so?)
That honour'd mind become a fearful blank,
Her senses lock'd up, and herself kept out
From human sight or converse, while so many
Of the foolish sort are left to roam at large,
Doing all acts of folly, and sin, and shame?
Thy paths are mystery!

Yet I will not think,
Sweet friend, but we shall one day meet, and live
In quietness, and die so, fearing God.
Or if *not*, and these false suggestions be
A fit of the weak nature, loth to part
With what it lov'd so long, and held so dear;
If thou art to be taken, and I left
(More sinning, yet unpunish'd, save in thee);
It is the will of God, and we are clay
In the potter's hands; and, at the worst, are made
From absolute nothing, vessels of disgrace,
Till, his most righteous purpose wrought in us,
Our purified spirits find their perfect rest.

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES.

Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?
I had a mother, but she died, and left me,
Died prematurely in a day of horrors—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school days—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I lov'd a love once, fairest among women;
Clos'd are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man.
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like, I pac'd round the haunts of my child-
hood.
Earth seem'd a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother!
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces.

For some they have died, and some they have left
me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

JANUARY 1798.

COMPOSED AT MIDNIGHT.

From broken visions of perturbed rest
I wake, and start, and fear to sleep again.
How total a privation of all sounds,
Sights, and familiar objects, man, bird, beast,
Herb, tree, or flow'r, and prodigal light of heav'n!
'Twere some relief to catch the drowsy cry
Of the mechanic watchman, or the noise
Of revel, reeling home from midnight cups.
Those are the moanings of the dying man,
Who lies in the upper chamber; restless moans,
And interrupted only by a cough
Consumptive, torturing the wasted lungs.
So in the bitterness of death he lies,

And waits in anguish for the morning's light.
What can that do for him, or what restore?
Short taste, faint sense, affecting notices,
And little images, of pleasures past,
Of health, and active life—(health not yet slain,
Nor the other grace of life, a good name, sold
For sin's black wages.) On his tedious bed
He writhes, and turns him from th' accusing light,
And finds no comfort in the sun, but says,
"When night comes, I shall get a little rest."
Some few groans more, death comes, and there an end.
'Tis darkness and conjecture all beyond;
Weak nature fears, though charity must hope;
And fancy, most licentious on such themes,
Where decent reverence well had kept her mute,

Hath o'erstock'd hell with devils, and brought down
By her enormous fablings, and mad lies,
Discredit on the gospel's serious truths,
And salutary fears. The man of parts,
Poet, or prose declaimer, on his couch
Lolling, like one indifferent, fabricates
A heaven of gold, where he, and such as he,
Their heads encompassed with crowns, their heels
With fine wings garlanded, shall tread the stars
Beneath their feet, heaven's pavement, far remov'd
From damned spirits, and the torturing cries
Of men, his brethren, fashion'd of the earth,
As he was, nourish'd with the selfsame bread,
Belike his kindred or companions once,
Through everlasting ages now divorced,
In chains, and savage torments, to repent

Short years of folly on earth. Their groans unheard
In heaven, the saint nor pity feels, nor care,
For those thus sentenc'd—pity might disturb
The delicate sense, and most divine repose,
Of spirits angelical. Blessed be God,
The measures of his judgments are not fix'd
By man's erroneous standard. He discerns
No such inordinate difference and vast
Betwixt the sinner and the saint, to doom
So disproportion'd fates. Compar'd with him,
No man on earth is holy call'd: they best
Stand in his sight approv'd, who at his feet
Their little crowns of virtue cast, and give
To him of his own works the praise, his due.

THE END.

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